

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

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For Collectors of Recorded Vocal
Art on Disc or Cylinder

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JAMES F. E. DENNIS

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FRANK TITTERTON

(Photograph supplied by a family friend)

The RECORD COLLECTOR

A MAGAZINE FOR COLLECTORS OF RECORDED VOCAL ART

* * *

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FRANK TITTERTON

by Charles I. Morgan

Frank Titterton was one of the most versatile and popular of English tenors. He had a voice of distinctive timbre and easily recognised style, irrespective of whether he sang under his own name, or as Guy Marshall, Norton Collyer or the Italian tenor Francesco Vada. He was a fairly prolific recording artist under all of them, though mainly as Titterton, perhaps it was thought that this name was occurring too frequently in the release sheets. His repertoire was large, but also wide, which is not the same thing. He recorded Lieder, opera, oratorio, operetta, ballads and popular songs of his period. That would make him a tenor version of Peter Dawson and only George Baker, who did all these, added other side-lines, speech, all the voices on the 'departure of a troopship', comedy patter, etc.

Titterton was born at Handsworth, near Birmingham on December 31st, 1892. His father was George Titterton, J.P., a Birmingham merchant well known for his oratory in public and much in demand for after dinner speeches. His mother was the former Miss Mary Ann Wooley, well known throughout the Midlands as a concert soprano and was often featured in the concerts at Birmingham Town Hall, particularly by the conductor Stockley. She lived to the great age of 87 and Titterton was devoted to her. She was of course his vocal mentor and sternest critic in his early years.

One of the drawbacks in trying to piece Titterton's career together is the absence of definite dates. His main recording career lasted fourteen years and I doubt if any other singer has been as prolific in the same time span. He recorded a few odd sides later, as shown in the discography. But he managed to be involved in a variety of activities before the idea of taking up singing as a profession took hold.

As a youngster he was a very keen sportsman, difficult to visualise in later years, when his development laterally was almost embarrassing. For his last four years at school he was captain of the sports team, best at long distance running, but he also gained nine medals for swimming. After

school Titterton went into the office of the local Gas Company, but when his father, who had an interest in locks and safes, bought a business of that type, Titterton went into it until the 1914 war broke out. During this time his interest in sports remained keen and he added horse riding, ice hockey and shooting to his activities. He played ice hockey for a team called the Orientals and had frequent brushes with a member of an opposing team, Nigel Cave, of Cave Brown Cave the cowboy millionaire, who some years later married his sister.

Whilst with the gas department Titterton became a close friend of both Barry Jackson and John Drinkwater and later joined them as a member of the Pilgrim Players. This was well before they joined the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and is in the first photo of the group now hanging in the Rep. He never forgot the shows they used to give in the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms in those days. His chief function was as stage manager, but he also acted on occasion; his abiding memory is from when he played "The Man in the Moon" in Barry Jackson's production. He had to slide down a moonbeam, which in fact was a solid plank of wood, always with the fear that the plank would break or he would get a vicious splinter somewhere very painful. He also produced shows at the Theatre Royal in aid of charity, so he was acquiring a stage and musical atmosphere which later stood him in good stead.

When war broke out he joined the 3rd Warwicks, but because of his mechanical knowledge was transferred to the engineering side and did a lot of work on tanks. After being demobilised, for three years he held an agency for a Sheffield steel firm. During that time something happened which influenced the remainder of his life. The Birmingham Operatic Society found themselves without a leading man for Gilbert and Sullivan's "Ruddigore". He was asked to undertake the rôle, accepted with some reluctance and much to his surprise had a good success and played the part, plus others, frequently during the next few years.

Titterton placed himself for vocal tuition under the Birmingham coach of the day, William Bennett, and later studied under Ernesto Beraldi, Charles Victor and it is claimed the legendary Jean de Reszke. After singing in Birmingham for some time he decided to try his luck in London. He had the usual despairing bad period when he met the wife of the director of the Aeolian Hall, who advised him to take the bull by the horns and show what he could do. So in collaboration with the soprano Olga Haley he gave a six months series of concerts at the Aeolian Hall and found himself with some degree of fame.

Mrs. Read also obtained an audition for him with the Vocalion Record Company and when he heard his first recording from November 1921 played back was quite amazed, saying he should have tried that years before. He remained with Vocalion until 1927, then made two records for Columbia before going over to Broadcast 10 and Broadcast 12. These were actually 20 cm (8 inch) and 25 cm (10 inch) discs with the playing time of the two standard sizes they were named after, the prices of which were severely undercut. This was no cheap jack enterprise and in fact greatly

expanded the record industry by attracting a whole new record buying public. Of course the major companies disowned the upstarts and instructed their retail agents not to stock them. But apart from much popular and dance music Broadcast used many famous orchestras, bands and instrumental and vocal soloists. The records were intended for sale in the large retail department stores, such as Woolworth's, but demand grew so great that the normal record retailers had to stock them also. The business flourished until some other companies tried making even smaller and much worse quality discs for as little as sixpence (2½p) each, spoiling the market. Broadcast refused to compete on those terms and ultimately the major companies bought up all the smaller pressing plants, stopped the manufacture of all small sized discs and the trade returned to normal. During the hectic years it lasted, though, it did much to popularise the name of Frank Titterton, "Guy Marshall" and "Francesco Vada". Returned to the legitimate market, apart from the few Columbia sides and the one charity recording for H.M.V. in 1943 Titterton became an exclusive Decca artist.

He recorded the songs of Lozanne, the composing name of Mrs. Alma Rattenbury, a talented pianist and composer of popular songs in Canada before coming to Bournemouth, England early in 1930 with her husband. She approached the music publishers, Keith Prowse, to find if they would be interested in publishing her songs. They were enthusiastic mainly on the strength of the song "Avallette". The band leader Ambrose became interested and played some of her songs on the radio. This success spurred her to greater efforts and she wrote a whole new series, including the well known "Dark haired Marie". She bought a number of recordings of tenor voices and on hearing Titterton said "This is the voice for my songs, a popular singer with a sensitive ear". She wrote introducing herself and invited him to lunch at a London hotel. He turned up with his secretary-accompanist, Miss Esmond and after his chat was particularly impressed with Mrs. Rattenbury's intense emotionalism. He liked her songs and broadcast them on many occasions. She accompanied him on two of the recordings of her songs and through him came to know Richard Tauber. In 1935 she was implicated with her chauffeur-handyman in the death of her husband and was imprisoned pending trial. Titterton visited her there. At the trial she was acquitted, but committed suicide shortly afterwards. This upset Titterton very much; he deplored not only the loss of a great talent, but also a personal friend.

Titterton was very popular with radio audiences and frequently received in excess of a hundred letters a day. He was a regular broadcaster in feature B.B.C. programmes for over twenty years, right up to the time of his death. He was a member of the British National Opera Company, appearing in *Tosca* and various other works. He also sang at a lot of Promenade Concerts and at principal Festivals. He sang *Gerontius* several times in the Three Choir Festivals under the baton of Sir Edward Elgar during the last years of the composer's life. Elgar thought highly of him and referred to him as the living *Gerontius*. Titterton sang in Holland and Belgium and was one of the sixteen soloists selected to sing at Sir Henry Wood's Jubilee Concert

in the Albert Hall in 1938 in Vaughan Williams' "Serenade to Music". He also appeared in films, notably "Waltz Time" with Evelyn Laye and Parry Jones. He was guest soloist with the City of Birmingham Choir at their first concert given on 28th November, 1921, with Dorothy Silk, Mary Foster, Dorothy D'Orsay and Geoffrey Dams in Rutland Boughton's "Bethlehem". His singing was always noted for its versatility and reliability. He returned on three occasions as guest soloist; on November 4th, 1931, in the first Midland performance of Kodaly's "Psalmus Hungaricus" and in Brahms' "Requiem" with Joan Cross and Howard Fry; on December 12th, 1936, in Handel's "Messiah", with Stiles Allen, Gladys Ripley and Horace Stevens and on December 26th and 28th, 1943, again in "Messiah" with Margaret Field-Hyde, Joan Cross, Muriel Brunskill and Norman Lumsden.

Titterton never liked using a microphone and said it could make anyone sound like Caruso and that by encouraging its use we were helping inferior singers to the detriment of first class ones. An incident in a 1934 Promenade Concert in which Titterton appeared angered the great conductor. Titterton had just sung the aria "Sound an alarm" and received thunderous applause when a man in the audience shouted to Sir Henry that Titterton had omitted a crescendo. Sir Henry replied angrily that for at least thirty years to his knowledge the aria had always been sung in the way that Mr. Titterton had just rendered it. This concert was being broadcast so the incident was heard by thousands of listeners.

A concert given at the Tower Hall in collaboration with the soprano Joan Hammond during the last war had an audience which barely half filled the hall. This was mainly due to the fact that it was a very wet and windy evening. Titterton came on stage, thanked the audience for turning out on such an unpleasant evening and asked them to come forward to the front seats where they would be more comfortable and warm and then commenced the concert with his usual style and versatility.

I only heard Titterton in a live concert once, that was in my home town Abertillery, Gwent, at the Pavilion Theatre there in the early 1940's, when I was in my late teens. I well remember the giggles when the then portly figure walked on stage, to which he retorted never judge a sausage by its skin and then proceeded to sing a varied programme much to the satisfaction of the capacity audience.

During the last ten years or so of his life in addition to his many concert and broadcasting engagements Titterton also took up voice training at his London home. Below is a copy of an article that appeared in a 1953 edition of the "Opera" magazine:

"All those who sing or want to sing seek to know the answers to many questions and these might well be summarised as follows — What is the meaning of the different sensations I experience when singing or speaking and how may I know which is the right sensation to feel; What does it really mean to place the voice and how can one tell the right place is being used; Is it true that the right production of the voice depends on the right control of the muscles and ligaments used when a vocal sound is being

made speaking or singing; When my voice is throaty either when singing or speaking is it because I lack control of these muscles or ligaments, Is this also the reason why my mouth or vowel sound never seems to stay in position when singing a cadenza or run; Is it a good thing or a bad thing to have any tenseness in the body when singing; What is a resonant note, how may I achieve resonance of tone?

In order to find the right answers to these questions Mr. Frank Titterton devoted a vast amount of time and energy to the study from the medical point of view of all the organs of vocal production, to which he added years of observations acquired from his own singing experience as a world famous tenor. Now at his Hampstead studio he is able to demonstrate conclusively that he knows the answers, not only to the questions asked above, but to all the problems arising in voice production and this knowledge is now available both to student or intended teacher in simple and easily understood form.

Many professionals go to him in trouble with their voices from one source or another and, while they are still working, he has shown them how to correct the fault and so quickly does his instruction lead to free and easy movement and right control that both the singer and manager have expressed astonishment at the speed with which the result was obtained. Mr. Frank Titterton is available at 14 Wedderburn Road, Hampstead, N.W.3., Telephone Hampstead 3060."

What is sure is that Frank Titterton retained his own voice to the end. He was due to sing in a broadcast of "The Golden Age of Popular Song 1918-1939" on December 8th, 1956, but on November 22nd of that year he entered Roehampton Hospital and had an operation for a leg complaint. Tragically he died there on November 24th, a little over five weeks short of his 64th birthday.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FRANK TITTERTON DISCOGRAPHY

12 in. (30 cm) Vocalion acoustic

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 02616 | Eleanore (Coleridge Taylor)
In a Persian Garden: Ah Moon (Liza Lehmann) Nov. 1921
K-05026 |
| 02680 | LILY OF KILLARNEY: The moon hath raised (Benedict)
with M. McEachern. Rev: McEachern only Mar. 1922
D-02053 |
| 02681 | Watchman, what of the night (Sergeant) with M. McEachern
Rev: McEachern only Mar. 1922
D-02089 |
| 03192 | A Night in Venice (Strauss) with K. Destournel May 1923 |
| 03193 | IL TROVATORE: Miserere (Verdi) with Destournel
D-02096 |
| 03247 | Snowdrops (Liza Lehmann) with Kathleen Destournel
May 1923 |
| 03248 | MADAME BUTTERFLY: Love duet, with Destournel
D-02102 |
| 03418 | CARMEN: Flower song (Bizet) Dec. 1923 |
| 03419 | MEISTERSINGER: Prize song (Wagner)
D-02134 |
| 03582 | LOHENGRIN: Mein lieber Schwann June 1924
LOHENGRIN: In fernem Land
K-05103 |
| 03640 | MADAME POMPADOUR: By the light of the moon (Fall)
with Gladys Moncrieff. Rev: Moncrieff only Aug. 1924
K-05116. Australian Voc. S 100 |
| 03720 | The Battle Eve (Bonheur) with M. McEachern Oct. 1924 |
| 03721 | Flow gently Deva (Parry) with M. McEachern
K-05153 |
| 03722 | SEMELE: Where er' you walk (Handel) Oct. 1924 |
| 03723 | IL SERAGLIO: Constanza, Constanza (Mozart) (It)
K-05172 |
| 04066 | LA BOHEME: Your tiny hand is frozen (Puccini)
Aug. 1925 |
| 04067X | TOSCA: Strange harmony (Puccini)
K-05189 |
| 04197 | LA BOHEME: Lovely maid (Puccini) with Destournel
Rev: Destournel & Williamson Nov. 1925
K-05213 |

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04199	SAMSON: Total eclipse (Handel)	Nov. 1925
04200	MESSIAH: Thou shalt break them (Handel) K-05217	
04305	Come away death & O mistress mine (Roger Quilter)	Feb. 1926
04306XX	Damask Roses & Brown is my love (R. Quilter) K-05251	
12 in. (30 cm) Vocalion electric		
MO-69	Excelsior (Balfe) with M. McEachern	Oct. 1926
MO-70	Larboard Watch (Williams) with McEachern K-05267	
MO-82X	JOCELYN: Angels guard thee (Godard)	Oct. 1926
MO-83	My Queen (Blumenthal) K-05304	
MO-364	Student Prince: Deep in my heart (Friml) with Moncrieff Rev: Gladys Moncrieff only Australian Vocalion S-107	May 1927
MO-365	Princess Charming: Lips may deny (Sirmay-Bennett-Wallace) with Moncrieff. Rev: Moncrieff only K-05301, Australian Voc. S-108	May 1927
MO-366XX	Vagabond King: Love me tonight, with Moncrieff (Friml)	May 1927
MO-424	Vagabond King: Only a rose (Friml) with Moncrieff Australian Vocalion S-109	June 1927
MO-363X	Madame Pompadour: Love's sentry, with Moncrieff. Rev: Duet Moncrieff with John Thorne Australian Vocalion S-110	May 1927
MO-422	Desert Song: Desert song (Romberg) with Moncrieff. Rev: Moncrieff only K-05310, Australian Vocalion S-111	June 1927
MO-438	Blue Mazurka: I am alone, with Moncrieff (Lehar). Rev: Moncrieff only. Australian Vocalion S-112	July 1927
MO-440	Blue Mazurka: The locket I wore (Lehar) with Moncrieff Rev: Moncrieff only Australian Vocalion S-113	July 1927
MO-445	Rio Rita: Rio Rita (Tierney) with Moncrieff Rio Rita: If you're in love you'll waltz (Tierney) with G. Moncrieff Australian Vocalion SA 6001	Aug. 1927

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10 in (25 cm) acoustic Vocalion

02612	Little corner of your heart (Lohr)	Nov. 1921
02615	Macushla (McMurrough) X-9112	
02613	Although the silver moon was mine (Lohr)	Nov. 1921
02614	Bubble song (Shaw) X-9118	
02799	Mary of Allendale (Wilson)	July 1922
02801	Duna (McGill) X-9144	
02800	Go not happy day (F. Bridge)	July 1922
02802	Phyllis has such charming graces (Lane Wilson) X-9195	
03042	MARITANA: Then you'll remember me (Wallace)	Dec. 1922
03043	MARITANA: Yes, let me like soldier fall (Wallace) R-6101	
03191	Song of the Volga boatman (Koenemann)	Mar. 1923
03230	The dreary Steppe (Gretchaninov) X-9183	May 1923
03589	Songs of the Hebrides: Sea Rievers song (M. Kennedy Fraser)	
	Songs of the Hebrides: Kishmul's galley X-9462	June 1924
03628	I heard you singing (Coates)	Aug. 1924
03629	To Daisies (Roger Quilter) X-9476	
03901	Turn ye to me (Traditional)	Mar. 1925
03902	Songs of four nations – Jenny's mantle, old Welsh Air X-9595	
04301	Songs my mother taught me (Dvorak)	Feb. 1926
04302	I'll sing thee songs of Araby (Clay) X-9817	

10 inch (25 cm) electric Vocalion

MO-458	Rio Rita: The Rangers song (Tierney)	Aug. 1927
MO-460	Rio Rita: Following the sun around (Tierney) Australian Vocalion TA-8002	
LO-73XX	LA BOHEME: Your tiny hand is frozen (Puccini)	July 1928
LO-107X	LA BOHEME: O Mimi (Puccini) with Edgar Thomas	Sept. 1928
	Australian Vocalion 620, taken from Broadcast 12 masters	

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It is possible that Titterton could be in any vocal gems selections, on the Vocalion label. If any known please inform me.

BROADCAST 12, 10 inch (25 cm) electric

- | | |
|----------|---|
| LO 21 | PAGLIACCI: Vesti la giubba (Leoncavallo) as F. Vada.
May 1928 |
| LO 22 | RIGOLETTO: La donna & Questa o quella (Verdi) as Vada
5002 |
| LO 23X | TROVATORE: Miserere (Verdi) as Vada with T. Phillips
May 1928 |
| LO 24 | TALES OF HOFFMANN: Barcarolle as Vada with Thea
Phillips
3230, 5001, 5032 |
| LO 72X | CARMEN: Flower song (Bizet) July 1928 |
| LO 94 | LA REINE DE SABA: Lend me your aid (Gounod)
Aug. 1928
3240, 5062 |
| LO 73XX | LA BOHEME: Your tiny hand is frozen (Puccini)
July 1928 |
| LO 74XXX | L'AFRICAIN: O Paradiso (Meyerbeer)
5022 |
| LO82 | Watchman, what of the night? (Sargeant) as Guy Marshall
with Edgar Thomas July 1928 |
| LO 83 | LILY OF KILLARNEY: The moon has raised her lamp
above (Benedict) as Marshall, with Edgar Thomas
5023 |
| LO 105 | Excelsior (Balfe) as Marshall, with E. Thomas Sept. 1928 |
| LO 106 | The Battle Eve, as Marshall, with E. Thomas
5029 |
| LO 107 | LA BOHEME: O Mimi (Puccini) as Vada, with E. Thomas
Sept. 1928 |
| LO 108 | FAUST: Be mine the delight (Gounod) ditto
5073 |
| LO 118 | IL TROVATORE: Home to our mountains (Verdi) with
Constance Willis. Rev: Constance Willis only Sept. 1928
5031 |
| LO 174 | JOCELYN: Angels guard thee (Godard) Jan. 1929 |
| LO 175 | Ay, ay, ay (Friere)
5077 |
| LO 186 | Tenor & Baritone (Lane Wilson) as Marshall, with Graham
Stewart Jan. 1929 |
| LO 187 | The Gendarmes duet (Offenbach) as Marshall, with Stewart
5063 |

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LO 331	La Danza (Denza) as Francesco Vada	Sept. 1929
LO 335	MANON: Dream song (Massenet) as F. Vada 5136	
LO 332	Love's old sweet song (Mulloy) as Marshall, with Phillips. Rev: Thea Phillips & Arthur Vivian 5115	Sept. 1929
LO 529	O lovely night (L. Ronald), as Marshall with De La Porte	June 1930
LO 530	Homings (Del Riego) as Marshall with Betsy De La Porte 5150	
LO 769	Vienna, Vienna Rev: Charles Ancliffe's Orchestra 5199	Nov. 1930
LO 775X	Rio Rita: The Rangers' song (Tierney) Rev: Thea Phillips 5201	Dec. 1930
LO 891	O sole mio (Di Capua) as Marshall Gondoliers: Take a pair of sparkling eyes (Gilbert & Sullivan), as Marshall 3022	Mar. 1931

Broadcast 12 Vocal Gems which featured Titterton

LO-68XX	FAUST: Selections (Gounod) with John Thorne, etc.	July 1928
LO-69XX	5014	
LO-70	CARMEN: Selections (Bizet)	July 1928
LO-71	5018	
LO-218	The Gondoliers: Selections	Dec. 1928
LO-219	(Gilbert & Sullivan)	
LO-220		
LO-221X	5067 & 5068	
LO-807	PAGLIACCI: Selections	Jan. 1931
LO-808	(Leoncavallo)	
LO-809		
LO-810	5209 & 5210	

Broadcast 8, electric

Z-129	O sole mio (Di Capua)	July 1927
Z-130	La Paloma (Yradier) 150	
Z-77	Temple Bells (Woodford Finden)	June 1927
Z-81	Less than the dust (Woodford Finden) 151	

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Z-79	Till I awake (Woodford Finden)	June 1927
Z-80	Kashmiri song (Woodford Finden) 173	
Z-261-2	The Vagabond King: Only a rose (Friml) with T. Phillips. Rev: Thea Phillips only 218	Nov. 1927
Z-264-1	In an old fashioned town (Squire) as Marshall	Nov. 1927
Z-265-1	If I might come to you (Squire) as Marshall 235	
Z-446	Until (Sanderson) as Marshall. Rev: another artist 258, also issued on Eclipse SC 56. ditto	May 1938

Broadcast 8 Vocal Gems which feature Titterton

Z-56	The Mikado: Selection (Gilbert & Sullivan)	Apr. 1927
Z-51X	111	
Z-55	The Gondoliers: Selection (Gilbert & Sullivan)	Apr. 1927
Z-53X	112	
Z-54X	The Yeomen of the Guard: Selection, ditto	Apr. 1927
Z-52	113	

I believe that Titterton could be on other Broadcast 12 Vocal Gems records. If anyone recognises Titterton on any such, please send in details.

COLUMBIA 12 inch (30 cm) electric

WAX 3251	The Erl King (Schubert) pf. Pouishnoff	Feb. 1928
WAX 3250	On the Water (Schubert) 9431	
WAX 3252	By the sea (Schubert)	Feb. 1928
WAX 3252	Ave Maria (Schubert) 9432	
CAX 8367-2	Serenade to Music (Vaughan Williams)	15 Oct. 1938
CAX 8368-2A	Specially composed for the Jubilee of Sir Henry Wood's Concerts, when he conducted the B.B.C. Orchestra. It is seldom performed (a) because written for one special occasion, (b) the difficulty in assembling sixteen leading solo singers, four in each range. They were: Isobel Baillie, Stiles-Allen, Elsie Suddaby, Eva Turner. Margaret Balfour, Mary Jarred, Astra Desmond, M. Brunskill. Heddle Nash, Walter Widdop, Parry Jones, F. Titterton. Roy Henderson, Robert Easton, Harold Williams, N. Allin. The recording has been kept available in various forms by Columbia since publication.	
CAX 8369-1		
CAX 8370-1		
	LX 757-758	

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H.M.V., 10 inch (25 cm) electric

- OEA 10017 Serenade (Schubert) pf. accompaniment 1st July 1943
 OEA 10018 The Dear Little Rose of Old England (Michael). Composer
 at piano. Dedicated to H.R.H. The Duchess of Kent,
 President of the Alexandra Rose Day Fund, to which
 proceeds from sales were given.
 BD.1051

DECCA RECORD COMPANY, 12 inch (30 cm) electric, 1929-1934

- MA 486-2AXX LA BOHEME: Your tiny hand is frozen (Puccini) 24 Sept. 1929
 MA 746-1A CARMEN: Flower song (Bizet) 6 Dec. 1929
 K 505
 MA 837-1A LA BOHEME: Ah Mimi (Puccini) with Roy Henderson, in
 Italian.
 MA 838-3A FORZA DEL DESTINO: Solenne in quest' ora, in Italian,
 with Roy Henderson
 K 506
 MA 963-1 DIE WALKÜRE: Spring song (Wagner)
 DIE MEISTERSINGER: Prize song (Wagner)
 K 516
 MA 1824-1A HIAWATHA: Onaway, awake beloved (Coleridge Taylor)
 MA 1826-1A BOHEMIAN GIRL: When other lips and other hearts (Balfe)
 K 543
 GA 2146-1A MADAMA BUTTERFLY: Love duet (Puccini) with Olga
 GA 2147-1A Olgina, in Italian
 K 549
 GA 2154-3A LA TRAVIATA: Love duet (Verdi) with Olga Olgina, in
 GA 2155-2A Italian
 K 569
 KA 40-1C MESSIAH: Every Valley shall be exalted (Handel)
 KA 44-3C JUDAS MACCABEUS: Sound an alarm (Handel)
 K 594
 GA 2848-1 SEMELE: Where er' you walk (Handel) July 1931
 GA 2849-1 JUDAS MACCABEUS: How vain is man (Handel)
 K 613
 GA 3094-2 The last rose of summer (Traditional) 5 Aug. 1931
 GA 3095-1 McGregor's Gathering (Lee-Fagge)
 K 614
 GA 2540-3DJ Tom Bowling (Dibdin)
 GA 2541-3DJ The Bay of Biscay (Davy)
 K 615
 GA 2914-2DJ JEPHTHA: Deeper and deeper still (Handel)
 GA 2915-2DJ JEPHTHA: Waft her angels (Handel)
 K 616

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

- GA 2913-2AJ The jolly young waterman (Dibdin)
 GA 2916-2AJ The Death of Nelson (Braham)
 K 617
- KA 118-1 FOUR INDIAN LOVE LYRICS (Woodforde-Finden)
 KA 119-1 Temple Bells, Less than the dust, Kashmiri song, Till I wake
 K 673
- TA 1179-1 Operatic selection: When other lips, Let me like a soldier
 TA 1180-2 fall, There is a flower that bloometh, Questa o quella, La
 donna e mobile, M'appari.
 K 735
- TA 1573-1K Blossom Time (Schubert) Selections 26 Sept. 1934
 TA 1574-1 Two sides
 K 741
- DECCA 10 inch (25 cm) electric, 1929-41**
- MB 436-1AXX Phyllis has such charming graces (Lane-Wilson)
 10 Sept. 1929
- MB 437-1AXX Sea Rapture (Coates)
 F 1646, M 73
- MB 438-1 There is no death (O'Hara)
 MB 439-1 Love went a riding (F. Bridge)
 F 1648, M 77 10 Sept. 1929
- MB 483-2AXX TOSCA: Strange harmony (Puccini)
 MB 484-2AXX TOSCA: When the stars were brightly shining
 F 1653
- MB 933-1AX Maire my girl (Aitken)
 MB 935-2A For you alone (Geehl)
 F 1666
- MB 1180-2A PAGLIACCI: On with the motley (Leoncavallo)
 MB 1181-1A CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA: Siciliana (Mascagni)
 F 1739
- MB 1695-1A Until (Sanderson)
 MB 936-2AXX I heard you singing (Coates)
 F 1877
- MB 1698-2A I know of two bright eyes (Clutsam)
 MB 1699-1A Bright smiling eyes (Alcock)
 F 1915
- MB 1866-1A Love and War (Cook) with Richard Watson
 MB 1867-2A Larboard Watch (Williams) with Watson
 F 1947
- GB 1868-1A Excelsior (Balfe) with Richard Watson
 GB 1869-1A The moon hath raised her lamp above, with Watson
 F 2068

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

- MB 1976-2A I'll sing thee songs of Araby (Clay)
 MB 1697-1A Dolorosa (Phillips)
 F 2138
- GB 2073-1A Now sleeps the crimson petal & Fill a glass with golden
 GB 2074-1A wine (Quilter)/In a Persian Garden: Ah moon of my
 delight (Liza Lehmann)
 F 2187
- GB 2075-2A Come into the garden Maud (Balfe)
 GB 2076-1A To Anthea (Hatton) – Thy beaming eyes (MacDowell)
 F 2231
- KB 66-3C You are my heart's delight (Lehar)
 KB 65-2C Patiently smiling (Lehar)
 F 2325
- MB 625-1A The Lovers (Lane-Wilson) with Richard Watson
 MB k249-2AX Tenor & Baritone (Lane-Wilson) with Watson
 F 2356
- GB 2921-2DJ The song of songs (Moya) 8 Aug. 1930
 GB 2922-2DJ Little mother of mine (Burleigh-Brown)
 F 2371
- GB 2792-2C The two beggars (Lane-Wilson) with R. Watson
 GB 2793-2C The Gendarmes (Offenbach) with Richard Watson
 F 2377
- GB 3116-1DJ Because (D'Hardelot)
 GB 3117-1DJ Goodbye (Tosti)
 F 2470
- GB 3263-2 While hearts are singing (Cray-Strauss)
 GB 3264-2 Vienna, City of my dreams (Sieczynski)
 F 2517
- GB 3328-1DJ Christ in Flanders (Ward-Stephens)
 GB 3329-2DJ The Rosary (Nevin)
 F 2571
- GB 3112-1D I passed by your window (Brahe)
 GB 3113-2CJ A perfect day (Jacobs-Bond)
 F 2588
- GA 3737-3 Trees (Rosbach)
 GA 3739-3 Springtime reminds me of you (Stolz)
 F 2748
- GB 3114-1 I hear you calling me (Marshall)
 GB 3115-1 Where my caravan has rested (Lohr)
 F 2790
- GB 3281-3DJ Thora (Adams)
 KB 121-1CJP The Yeoman's wedding song (Poniatowsky)
 F 2828

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

- GB 3736-2DJ The snowy breasted pearl (Traditional)
 GB 3738-2DJ The Rose of Tralee (Glover)
 F 2864, F 3379
- GB 4111-2 Just one of my dreams (Kaper)
 GB 4112-2 The Cat and the Fiddle: Selection (Kern)
 F 2886
- GB 4269-3DJ Dubarry: Without your love (Millocker) with Olive Groves
 GB 4270-2D DUBARRY: If I am dreaming (Millocker)
 F 2925
- GB 4523-2 Goodnight Vienna (Posford)
 GB 4524-2 Just Heaven (Posford)
 F 3017
- GB 3819-1DJ In an old fashioned town (Squire)
 GB 3822-3DJ My dear soul (Sanderson)
 F 3032
- GB 4606-2D Only my song (Lehar)
 GB 4607-1D Gypsy Moon (Borganoff)
 F 3056
- GB 4854-2 Marta (Gilbert-Simons)
 GB 4855-1 You loving me (Stanley-Brodsky)
 F 3150
- GB 4927-3C Where is this lady?
 GB 4928-2C Tell me tonight (Spoliansky)
 F 3190
- GB 5006-1C Mexican Serenade (Teresse)
 GB 5007-1C I love thee (Grieg)
 F 3195
- GB 5004-3C Dark haired Marie (Locton-Lozanne) acc: Lozanne
 GB 5005-2C You brought my heart the sunshine (Gilmore-Lozanne)
 F 3210
- GB 4856-1C March of the Cameron men (Traditional)
 GB 4857-2C Annie Laurie (Scott)
 F 3247
- GB 5469-11D Once in a blue moon (Westrup-Fisher)
 GB 5470-1D Bless this house (Brane)
 F 3444
- GB 5561-11D Rose of Havana (Lockton-Lozanne)
 GB 5562-1D Loretta (Lozanne)
 F 3481
- GB 5475-11D Come out Vienna (Strauss-Herbert)
 GB 5477-1D Rev: by George Baker
 F 3514

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

GB 5559-11D	Night brings me to you (Locton-Lozanne)	
GB 5560-11D	Deep in my heart (Locton-Lozanne)	
	F 3557	
GB 5967-11D	This lovely Rose (Sievier-Ramsay)	
GB 5968-1D	Maureen O'Dare (Sievier-Ramsay)	
	F 3599	
GB 6103-1D	Heartless (Miesel-Hudson)	
GB 6199-1D	Throw open wide your window (May)	
	F 3694	
GB 6334-11D	Let me love you tonight (Waller-Tonbridge-Clay)	
GB 6335-11D	My song goes round the world (May)	
	F 3751	
GB 6488-11D	Play to me Gypsy (Vacek-Kennedy)	
GB 6490-11D	Princess Pat; Neapolitan love song (Herbert)	
	F 3851	
GB 6610-1	Gay Vienna (Totter-Kennedy)	
GB 6611-1	Unless (Hargreaves-Domgrell-Edwards)	
	F 3915	
TB 1122-1	Queen's Affair: Tonight (Carter-Schwartz)	
TB 1124-11	Josephine: Little Women (Buston-Jason-Stainer)	
	F 3934	
GB 6693-1	If (Marie Louise)	
GB 6694-1	Lonely is the night (Marie Louise)	
	F 3962	
TB 1329-2	Unforgotten Melody (Wood)	9 May 1934
GB 6487-2	I bless the dawn that brought me to you (Wood)	Jan. 1934
	F 3988	
TB 1238-1	Always (Leslie-Smith-Dyrenforth)	
GB 6200-11D	For love of you (Vienna-Pola)	
	F 5008	
TB 1240-2	Near and yet so far (Kester-Noble)	16 Mar. 1934
TB 1253-1	Lady of love (Tauber-Connor)	
	F 5073	
GB 6755-1	One kind word (Cages-Casson-Barker)	
GB 6756-11	The silent host (Shepherd-Host)	
	F 5233	
TB 1531-1	In your arms tonight (Gheel-Longton)	
TB 1671-1	Hold me in your arms (Russell)	
	F 5251	
TB 1587-2	Love forever I adore you (Michelli-Miller)	
TB 1582-2	Faith (Evans)	
	F 5272	28 Sept. 1924

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

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|------------|---|--------------|
| GB 6836-11 | You me and love (Conner-Stolz) | |
| GB 6837-11 | My heart is always calling you (Pepper-Stolz) | |
| | F 5378 | |
| GB 5693-1D | Shelmerdene (Lozanne) | |
| GB 5694-1D | Zanita (Lozanne) | |
| | F 5513 | |
| GB 5695-1 | By Naples waters (Lozanne) | |
| GB 5696-2 | Avalette (Lozanne) | |
| | F 5510 | |
| GB 7085-11 | By some mistake (Lozanne) | |
| GB 7086-11 | The Tempest King (Lozanne) | |
| | F 5525 | |
| GB 6198-1D | The English Rose (German) | |
| GB 7087-1 | The King's Song (Del Riego) | |
| | F 5530 | |
| GB 7084-1 | Shine through my dreams (Novello) | |
| GB 7088-1 | For love alone (Sievier-Thayer) | |
| | F 5598 | |
| GB 6835-11 | Asthore (Bingham-Trottere) | |
| GB 6838-11 | Beauty's eyes (Tosti) | |
| | F 5712 | |
| TB 1670-1 | Oh no John (Traditional) | |
| GB 6104-1D | Songs that live forever – Melody | |
| | F 6101 | |
| GB 6695-1 | The Erl King (Schubert) | |
| TB 1126-11 | In Summertime on Bredon (Peel-Housman) | |
| | F 6534 | |
| TB 1532-1 | The song of the nightingale (Aibout-Hudson) | |
| TB 1533-1 | The jolly old inn (Power-Turnop-De Wolf) | |
| | F 6849 | |
| DR 4595-1 | I wish you were here (Gade-Alan-Murray) | |
| DR 4594-1 | Today is ours (Eyton-Coates) | 18 Apr. 1940 |
| | F 7479 | |
| DR 6395-1 | The Church Bells of England (O'Connor-Russell) | |
| DR 6396-1 | The Lord's Prayer (Mallotte) | 31 Oct. 1941 |
| | F 8060 | |
| DR 6397 | Maire my girl (Aitken) | |
| DR 6398 | For you alone (Gheel) | |
| | Unpublished. | |
| MB 219-11A | TURANDOT: None shall sleep (Puccini) | |
| MB 220-1 | LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST: Let her believe that I have
gained my freedom (Puccini) | |
| | M-48 | |

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

DECCA, 10 inch (25 cm) electric, Titterton singing as Norton Collyer

DJ 18-2X	The devout lover (White)	20 Aug. 1929
DJ 13-2X	Bird songs at eventide (Coates)	17 Aug. 1929
	F 1522	
DJ 12-1	Macushla (McMurrough)	
DJ 14-1	Mother o' mine (Tours)	
	F 1562	
MB 622-2A	Watchman, what of the night (Sargeant)	
MB 624-1A	The battle eve (Bonheur) both with Harold Foster	
	F 1594	
MB 1761-2A	Lady of Rose: When hearts are young (Romberg)	
MB 1758-3A	Lady of Rose: Dream away, with Desiree Elinger	
	F 1908	
MB 1760-2A	O Maiden, my Maiden (Lehar)	
MB 1759-2A	Why did you kiss my heart away (Lehar) with Elinger	
	F 1909	
GB 1901-3A	Frederica: Selection, with Anne Welch (Lehar)	
GB 1902-1A	ditto	
	F 1949	
GB 1932-3A	MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS, Selection with Anne Welch	
GB 1932-3A	and Victor Conway (Fraser Simpson)	
	F 1989	
KB 67-1C	White Horse Inn: Selection (Benatsky) with Anne Welch	
KB 68-2C	and Victor Conway	
	F 2324	
GB 3285-2DJ	A Country Girl: Selection (Monkton) with Anne Welch	
GB 3286-2CJ	and Victor Conway.	

DECCA, 12 inch (30 cm), Titterton as Norton Collyer

GA 2977-1DJ	The Merry Widow: Selection (Lehar) with Anne Welch	
GA 2978-1DJ	and Victor Conway	
	K 545	
GA 2244-2A	The Boosey Ballads — incl: Kashmiri song, Fairy Pipes,	
GA 2245-2A	I hear you calling me, Company Sergeant Major, Bird of	
	love divine, Until. With A. Welch & V. Conway.	
	K 560	
GA 2118-1A	The Arcadians: Selection (Monkton) with Anne Welch &	
GA 2119-6A	Victor Conway	
	K 564	
GA 2242-1A	Chappell Ballads: Selection — Where my caravan, It is only	
GA 2243-2A	a tiny garden, She's far from the land, Rose in the bud,	
	I know a lovely garden, Little grey home in the west.	
	With A. Welch & V. Conway.	
	K 572	

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- GA 2979-2DJ MADAME POMPADOUR: Selection (Welisch-Fall-Schauer) with Anne Welch & Victor Conway.
K 592
- GA 3023-2DJ The Mikado: Selection (Gilbert & Sullivan) with Anne
GA 3024-2DJ Welch, Victor Conway, Doris Owens.
K 597
- GA 3025-2DJ The Yeomen of the Guard: Selection (Gilbert & Sullivan)
GA 3030-3DJ with Anne Welch, Victor Conway & Doris Owens
K 599
- GA 3330-2DJ WALTZES FROM VIENNA: One hour, Morning, Love
GA 3331-1DJ will find you, Star in the sky, While you love me, For we
love you still, With all my heart, Danube so blue. With
Anne Welch & Victor Conway.
K 607
- GA 3031-3DJ The Gondoliers: Selection (Gilbert & Sullivan) with Anne
GA 3032-1DJ Welch & Victor Conway
K 609
- GA 5064-2C Song of songs (Moya). This record also contained Edith
Baker and Gertrude Lawrence and was named "OK
DECCA". It used extracts from existing records, Song of
songs being taken from F 2371.
K 684

In the light of present knowledge the Decca matrix system is quite incomprehensible. So the recordings have been listed in catalogue number order, as issued.

MAYDAY

FERRUCCIO TAGLIAVINI. Almost ready. Can you please supply matrix numbers for any of the following:—

- BB 25237 Mi par d'udir (Pescatori)
Ay Ay Ay
- AT 0145 Lontano Lontano
Ave Maria (B-G)
- AT 0147 Dolce Sera
Torna a Surriento
- AT 0148 Ideale

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

MICHAEL BOHNEN

PART II

APPEARANCES

1941

- Jan. 8 Bartered Bride, Bohnen as Kezal, Schirp—Kruschina, Meinhardt—Kathinka, Irmgart Armgart—Marie (Guest), Windisch—Micha, Lita—Agnes, Florian—Wenzel, Cond. Lutze.
- Mar. 3 Fidelio, Bohnen as Pizarro, Windisch—Fernando, Treptow—Florestan, Stetzler—Leonore, Schirp—Rocco, Rudolph—Marzelline, Cond. Rother.
- Mar. 5 Cavalleria Rusticana, Bohnen as Alfio, Kutz—Santuzza, Vasso Agyris—Turiddu (Guest), Lita—Lucia, Schwarzkopf—Lola, Cond. Hans Thierfelder.
- Mar. 25 Cavalleria Rusticana, Bohnen as Alfio, Margarete Slezak—Santuzza, Haller—Turiddu, Lita—Lucia, Schwarzkopf—Lola.
- May 10 Siegfried, Bohnen as Wanderer, Pistor—Siegfried, Florian—Mime, Wilhelm Lang—Fafner, Meinhardt—Erda, Larcen—Brunnhilde, Hedderich—Waldvogel, Cond. Rother.
- Dec. 10 Fidelio, Bohnen as Pizarro, Windisch—Fernando, Hank Noort—Florestan, Herta Karina—Leonore, Lang—Rocco, Irma Beilke—Marzelline, Cond. Rother.

1942

- Jan. 7 Rosenkavalier, Bohnen as Ochs, Larcen—Marschallin, Stetzler—Octavian, Hoffmann—Sophie, Ditter—Faninal, Kreiner—Marianne, Annina—Kutz, Schilp—Marie, Reinhard Dorr—Singer. Cond. Gruber.

1943

- Oct. 13 Lustigen Weiber von Windsor, Bohnen as Falstaff, Schmitt-Walter as Fluth, Windisch—Reich, Rudolf Schock—Fenton, Florian—Sparlich, Heyer—Dr. Cajus, Pfahl—Frau Fluth, Schilp—Frau Reich, Cond. Lutze.

This is as far as we can go at present. Obviously Berlin war-time programmes are major rarities.

Recently I was fortunate enough to contact a musician who must have known Bohnen over a longer period than anybody else still alive.

Herr Horst Wahl, a trained vocalist, who spent his working life in the music industry, from recording technician to producer of radio programmes, is a contemporary of mine. He goes back far enough to have made acoustic recordings for Odeon and later was the instigator of the Odeon Historic Series of re-issues, which we in England know as the PX, PXO series, sends his impressions of Bohnen and also a tape recording of part of an interview

they recorded. I translate his letter in full. He writes:

"Now for Michael Bohnen. I experienced him from the middle of the Twenties until 1951, both in the Berlin Staatsoper and in the Charlottenburg Städtischen Oper (in the vicinity of which I was born and lived) in innumerable performances. One can not merely say "heard", with him one must say "experienced", because in spite of his fabulously beautiful and powerful voice he was also a natural phenomenon as actor. When HE stood on the stage (as with Chaliapin) one saw and heard no other artist because with his organ like voice and acting talent he totally dominated the scene. Bohnen possessed a typical bass-baritone. His range was so extended that he could equally comfortably sing pure bass or pure baritone parts. This explains the enormous 137 rôles which he mentions in his interview. In Tannhäuser for example I heard him as often as Landgraf as Wolfram. In the bottom a genuine black bass, in the baritonal heights with a radiant, penetrating metallic timbre. After Chaliapin, who was always his model, Bohnen portrayed the most magnificent type of singing-actor. Unfortunately with his impetuous temperament he tended to exaggerate in portraying a rôle and so often spoilt things for himself, which with more discipline he could have brought to perfection. For example one evening his Iago could be a nuance rich portrayal of great impressiveness — on another he exaggerated the finer allusions to big gestures and reduced it to the level of a Mephisto.

He describes these nuances on the portrayal of Scarpia most interestingly in the taped interview. If one was unfortunate enough to land one of these 'exaggeration evenings' as spectator there was the danger of classing it as 'provincial' or 'old-fashioned'. When he was forced by a great conductor to more discipline, who forced him to clean singing of the score, then the combination of voice, singing art and acting could put the theatre visitor under a magic spell. The synthesis which Wagner desired when he demanded the singing-actor was unfortunately not always realised with Bohnen, his ardour too often stood in his way — just as with Gigli and the cheap sobs straining after effect for the impressionable public.

That he during the six years of study with Schulz-Dornburg learnt much of the art of singing is demonstrated in his recording of Nelusko's aria from Dinorah and the Hamlet Brindisi in which he demonstrates the technique of mezza-voce, cantilene, shading and even the art of the trill. On the whole the great beauty of his voice (Ultraphon), his portraying ability, but also often the tendency to exaggerate bordering the limits of good taste one can hear from his recordings. When he wished he could demonstrate a perfect vocal technique, a clean legato, nuance rich phrasing and fine dynamic shading — unfortunately he often sacrificed this great vocal talent to his destroying temperament. In German stage circles one says "he gave his monkeys sugar".

In the Wolfram recording he surprises with an unexpectedly lyrical baritone, so he could, when he wanted, if only he had always wanted! At the age of 60, at the time of my interview, he had lost nothing of his atrocious temperament, his speaking voice was simply phenomenal. I remember when I once visited him during his time as Intendant at the Städtischen Oper, entering the vestibule where over one hundred people

had assembled shortly before a performance of *Otello*, he saw me at a distance of about twenty yards, and with his fine, sonorous, powerful voice called me a greeting, overriding the general conversation without difficulty.

I met Bohnen by accident in the Winter of 1932, during my singing-study period (with Professor Bernard Ulrich) when I went into the nearby restaurant "Zum Lindenblatt" and late in the evening sang the serenade from Casanova "Dort ist das Haus wo meine Süsse wohnt" in imitation of Bohnen's style. The door opened, the singer entered and spontaneously sang the piece with me to the end. Our acquaintance dated from then on, which never broke off and finally became friendship. (Bohnen lived for many years on the Kurfürstendam and by accident I had gone to his regular 'local' which was in the vicinity of my dwelling.) I eventually made a series of recordings of him on my own apparatus; an interesting comparison was, for example "Odins Meeresritt" by Carl Loewe and by Hans Pfitzner, which he sang in an inimitable impressive manner. Professionally I came together with him again at the Berlin Radio, where complete operas were recorded with him (Freischütz, Faust, Abu Hassan, etc.). Unforgettable for me remains a night which I spent with Bohnen and his friend the neurologist Dr. Dorndorf. The doctor wore, just as Bohnen, the at the time very modern octagonal glasses, drove, like him, a Horch (make of car) and the three of us sang through the evening into the early morning hours the complete monologues of Sachs, to which we played the live recordings from the Berlin Staatsoper of 22nd May, 1922.

Bohnen was a hail fellow well met type, vigorous, ostentatious with his voice, a totally dazzling, yet dubious, personality, he had boxed and wrestled, never missed a big boxing match, whether it was Max Schmeling, Hans Breitensträter, Franz Diener or Hein Domgörgen. When you wrote "the more I read about Bohnen the less I like him" I can well understand this, then from external appearances there were so many assertions, showing-off, exaggerations, extravagances in his nature, also not always the whole truth in his wild, made-up dramatic stories. He was a bull brawny man, though he was no giant (the opposite to Chaliapin, who stood like a tower in the battle). (I myself stand 1 metre 80, and Bohnen was certainly no taller) he always kept his weight to two Zentner (215 pounds) but he kept in complete training and commanded an enormous bodily strength. So it is a fact that in the film "August der Starke" (August the Strong) in the famous scene where he had to bend a horseshoe, he did this without any trickery. He was united with the dancer La Jana in a wild love-hate relationship, which often came to blows.

Hitler invited him to the Reichskanzlei, because he admired him as Hans Sachs, Goebbels lured La Jana from him and in 1944 (as a man of 57) had him called up for the army. Once again chance brought me together with Bohnen, for after being wounded I was seconded to the Head Enrolling Commission (corner of Kurfürstendam and Uhlandstrasse) only a few steps away from Bohnen's flat) and arranged with the competent head doctor that Bohnen would not be enrolled (he had already been in the first war) but as a so-called "Diensverpflichtiger" (compulsory service) was allocated to the firm of Siemens with the duty of delivering packets.

In May 1945, when I took over as head of the Music Department of Berlin Radio, I introduced Bohnen to the Russian Cultural Officer (a woman) and it transpired that the Russians, on account of Bohnen's friendship with Chaliapin and his uncommonly effective art on stage and behaviour appointed him as Intendant of the Städtischen Oper (which at the time played in the Theater des Westens). When the Russians later left Charlottenburg (where the Berlin Radio also stood) they frequently tried to get him to go to East Berlin and the Staatsoper (then in the Admiralspalast) but he always declined.

At this time Bohnen trained Josef Metternich and Hans Beirer; he taught Metternich to an astonishingly similar vocal standard as his own. Beirer gave him poor thanks for his training, plus an engagement at the Städtische Oper and denounced him as a Nazi. Later Beirer was very ashamed of having done this and apologised to Bohnen. When the time of "Denazification" came Bohnen also had to appear at the court. I myself appeared on his behalf and through my deposition succeeded in that he was sentenced as a 'minor participant'. (He was sentenced to three years Berufsverbot – ED). In any case this did not help him much as in the meantime he had become sixty and after the period of forced inactivity (1947-1950) was only able to give his splendid Farewell Performance as Hans Sachs (in 1951 at 64).

In the fifties there followed a very bad time for him, he had no sort of income and had to go on the dole as unemployed, lost weight from his 215 pounds to 130 and was only a shadow of his old self.

East Berlin awarded him the Goethe-Prize in 1952, but it was not until 1964 that the Metropolitan appointed him to Honorary Member, together with a pension (This is wrong, a Met Archivist writes there is no knowledge of any appointments of Honorary Members. The Metropolitan Opera Employee's Welfare Fund granted Bohnen a pension of one hundred dollars a month from December 1st, 1964 – ED), in 1957 Bundespräsident Theodor Heuss awarded him the Grosse Bundes Verdienstkreuz and for his 75th birthday he was given the Honorary Membership of the German Opera House, so that at least in his last days he did not suffer hunger.

Naturally I know the series of articles in "Stern" – "Einmal endet der Applaus". Some is true, much is exaggerated, a great deal is made up sensation. As related, Bohnen was a fairy story-teller, his temperament remained with him in old age and allowed him to wander from the path of strict truth. Much, like saving the life of Richard Strauss was artistically embroidered. Despite all the strong arm stuff however he remains a singing-actor of great stature with a voice belonging to the most noble and powerful that one has ever heard on a stage. He was a really inspired and inspiring true artist, who also in his time as Intendant worried like a father about the well-being and misfortunes of the artists in his care, for instance no detail in the costumes of his singers was beneath his notice. I have heard a great deal of praise for him."

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The tape Herr Wahl sent makes interesting listening, especially to hear Bohnen's speaking voice in full cry, but it does not add any facts of importance not mentioned elsewhere in this article. It starts with Bohnen stating he studied with Schulz-Starnberg for six years, all subjects including fencing, dancing and languages, ultimately he knew 137 rôles in four languages. His first engagement was at Dusseldorf with a wage of two hundred Marks. The tape is obviously excerpts from a longer one, so the narrative is much broken up. Bohnen says he went to Berlin to hear Parsifal as it was being mounted at Wiesbaden, where he was engaged at the time. He had studied the rôle at Bayreuth under Siegfried Wagner and Cosima. The Berlin Intendant came and asked Bohnen if he could sing Gurnemanz as the engaged artist had called off. Bohnen did so and at the end was called to see the Kaiser in the royal box. There being no time to change he had to go in costume. The Kaiser said he had often seen the work at Bayreuth, but this one made him hot and cold and brought him to tears. He produced an etui containing the Kaiser brooch, set with rubies and brilliants, gave it to Bohnen and said "So, Herr Kammersänger, in memory of this evening." Whilst engaged at Berlin Reczinek wrote the part of Holofernes specially for Bohnen. He went to Vienna in 1918 because of the behaviour of the radicals, led especially by a tenor and Richard Strauss was so upset he said he could no longer stand it and asked Bohnen to accompany him and start a new era. Whilst he was there Gatti Casazza came to the Bristol Hotel and asked to see Bohnen and according to him that is exactly all that happened, Gatti Casazza just sat and looked at him and never said a word. Bohnen lost patience, asked "Why" and receiving no answer eventually lost patience, said "Auf Wiedersehen" and left for an engagement in Berlin. Two days later came a telegram engaging him for the Metropolitan. Bohnen claims that altogether he was there for the equivalent of thirteen years. Then there is a bit on portraying rôles, Bohnen said he could sing fifty different Scarpias; gallant, lame, with three pointed beard, a walking stick and he also used different voices, sardonic, menacing, cutting. His Mephisto (Gounod) was played as a grey and irritable figure. Chaliapin did the same and also achieved his effects by studying humanity. In singing Brahms, Schumann and Schubert Lieder he was unsurpassable, drawing his feeling from the background of the Steppes. He could not sing Wotan and Bohnen said he never sang Boris Godunov or Mefistofele (Boito) after hearing Chaliapin. Bohnen made about thirty films, though it was often thrown at him that he should stick to serious art. He founded his own film company. The tape ends with Herr Wahl playing a recording of Bohnen singing "Wundervoll, Fabelhaft" from the film Zwei Krawatten, as Bohnen no longer possessed a recording of the piece. It is remarkable for the way in which he rolls his "Rs". The tape is interesting in showing that Bohnen was still an actor. He changes the pitch of voice when relating what was said to him by other people, mostly Intendants, but overdoes it in giving them the broad dialect of their cities — except the Kaiser — educated people do not engage in such sloppy speech.

That, I think, leaves nothing but a few loose ends to tie up. Though always labelled as "The German Chaliapin", whom he admired and

certainly often aped, Bohnen was always eager to try a new work, apart from *Holofernes* and *Rappelkopf* already mentioned he also created a rôle in D'Albert's *Stier von Olivera*, none of these have survived and no recordings made from them. Returning to the comparison, Bohnen had the better voice, was a better actor (Chaliapin's one film was a relative flop), yet never made the same grade in public esteem. There have been many great singers whose personality generates an indefinable bond between stage and audience, where the artist dominates the performance, where one is aware of the presence all the time, even when not actually in action. Such were Pertile, Tibbett, Scotti, Schorr and Bohnen. The current generated dissipates, leaving memories of a fine performance. Occasionally a star emerges who generates a more permanent charge, so the audiences become disciples and fame spreads outside the actual listening circle. People who have never even heard a recording of Caruso, Tauber or Chaliapin usually know the names.

There is no real comparison between Bohnen and Chaliapin. Unmistakeably Chaliapin stood there before you, his height alone saw to that, but his portrayal was a matter of mental approach. In his mind he became the character he was singing and conveyed this mainly by facial expression and vocal nuances. That he over-acted at times was probably more a mental aberration than done intentionally. When Bohnen stood there frequently he could not be recognised for the make-up, though the "presence" could be sensed. What Chaliapin did was a gift of nature, his mental switching ability and inner convictions. With Bohnen it was applied art, using all the skills he had been taught and later acquired with experience to impersonate the character, usually with great success, he was playing. This explains Chaliapin's success as a Lieder singer, even in an alien language; very few suited Bohnen when he had to stand unadorned.

It has often been written elsewhere that Bohnen was made to be a porter for refusing to join the Nazi party. In fact in 1944 "total war" was declared and everybody not engaged with a firm doing war work, was allocated to one. Bohnen was sent to Siemens Radio at Spandau. All this unskilled labour was of course a hindrance to the professionals, Bohnen was usually given a packet to deliver on the other side of the city and not expected to reappear until the evening.

In 1945 at the end of the war we find Bohnen sitting discontentedly on the sofa on which Chaliapin had slept. He still had the second floor flat in the Kurfurstendam that he took in 1932, war damaged, but still habitable. The area was then occupied by the Russians, though later when the city was divided into sectors it became British. The Russians asked him, because he was known to them as a friend of Chaliapin, to make an effort to restart cultural life and gave him the *Städtischer Oper* in the old Charlottenburg house. Bohnen gathered what forces he could find and in any case word soon spread that he was there. The damaged roof was temporarily repaired and a curtain sewn together from oddments. On June 15th Bohnen mounted his first ballet and on 2nd September, 1945, his first opera, *Fidelio*, cast: Gunther-Florestan, Norina Butz-Fidelio, Irma Beilke-Marzelline, Erich Witte-Jacquino, Heinz-Nissen-Pizarro. Cond. Robert Heger. This was followed by a *Cavalleria Rusticana*/Pagliacci, *The Bartered Bride* and a *Salome* with Fritz Soot and Karina Kütz.

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

In 1947 Charlottenburg was in the British sector when Beirer denounced Bohnen for having been a Nazi. The outcome has been related by Herr Wahl. He never had been a party member, but what sank him was the long association with La Jana, who had been a very ardent one. The Berufsverbot meant that he was unable to continue as Intendant for the next three years. In fact he never went back except to give his Farewell Performance as Hans Sachs in 1951.

By now he was in a poor way, aged 64 and having to live on unemployment benefit. Miserably still parked on his sofa, the original wall coverings entirely covered by signed photographs of his great contemporaries. His choice of Sachs had been a good one, throughout the 20's-30's he had been hailed as Germany's greatest exponent of the rôle and today a leading collector avers that he has left the finest recordings from the work, without, unfortunately, specifying which. I have been promised a discussion on the recordings by a man who has access to practically every one of them. Hopefully the appearance of this part will lead to this as a Part II. He was eventually awarded two pensions and belatedly American friends asked about one from the Met. He was awarded one of \$100 a month by the Friends of the Metropolitan Opera, but died of a heart attack five months later on April 26th, 1965. Somehow in the obituary notices appeared the statement that he had been appointed an Honorary Member of the Met, but the archivist there writes me there is no trace of this, or of such an honour having been awarded to any artist.

Regrettably I have to finish by writing that I feel no sympathy for, and in fact do not like the man.

APPENDIX 1

Four traced pre-war radio broadcasts of complete operas. All were performed in Hall 1, of Berlin Radio and as the figures in the first column show were recorded on to sets of 78 r.p.m. discs. The custom then was to send a set to each other important radio station.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-------------------|
| 21522-40 | BARBIER VON BAGDAD (Cornelius) Bohnen in title rôle with Günther Baum, Kiefer, Constanze Nettesheim as Marziana W. Ludwig as Nureddin. Chorus and Orchestra of Radio Berlin, conductor Hans Rosbaud.
Duration: 1 hr. 21.26 mins. | Recorded 27.10.34 |
| 30448-77 | DER WAFFENSCHMIED (Lortzing), Bohnen title rôle, Carla Spletter as Marie, Erich Zimmermann as Georg, Marg. Arndt-Ober as Erzieherin. Chor. & Orch. R.S.S. Berlin, Cond. Gustav a Schlemm.
Duration: 1 hr. 45.44 mins. | Recorded 5.5.36 |
| 33996-032 | DER FREISCHÜTZ (Weber), Bohnen as Caspar, with Hüscher as Ottakar, Lemnitz as Agathe, Beilke-Annchen, Wittrisch-Max, Sieber-Samiel, Eremit-Kurt Böhme. Berlin Radio Chor. & Orch. Cond. H. Steiner.
Duration: 2 hr. 07.03 mins. | Recorded 20.12.36 |

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

- 42750-89 FAUST (Gounod) complete, Bohnen as Mephistopheles, with Roswaenge, H. Singenstreu, M. Ahlsmeyer, Chor. & Orch. R.S. Berlin, Cond. Heinrich Steiner.
Duration: 2 hr. 24.30 mins. Recorded 6.3.38

APPENDIX 2

Bohnen on Microgroove, by R. N. Colin

1. Discophilia DIS 267 (Arias 11, Songs 3) Brunswicks.
2. Electrola, 83 383, Die Goldene Stimme (Arias 11, 1 song).
3. Preiser LV 12 (Arias 11 & Meistersinger duet, Lehmann).
4. Preiser LV 192 (Arias and scenes 14, songs 2, with Schützendorf, Bettendorf, Lehmann)
5. Preiser LV 287 (11 Arias and Kol Nidre).
6. Court Opera Classics CO-387 (Wagnerian scenes with E. Kraus and Lehmann).
7. Court Oopera C
7. Court Opera Classics CO-410 (Arias).
8. Telefunken HT-47, Unvergessene Bariton (Arias 4, song 2, Bartered Bride duet with Schmidt).
9. Top Classic Historia H-681-2, 2 LPs. (Arias 16, songs 3, scenes 2, duets 5, w/Pattiera, Schmidt, Hutt, Sturm).
10. Discophilia KG-B-4 (Arias 6, B. Bride duet, Casanova excerpts).
11. VOX, OPEX 149 (3 LPs) (Abu Hassan, complete with Schwarzkopf, and Witte).
12. Urania 7029 (Abu Hassan complete. Fake stereo on 50729.)
13. ASCO 104 (Casanova, excerpts with Ahlers, Arno, Lieske, Frind).
14. Electrola 501 (Casanova, as above).
15. Electrola 073 343 (Ständchen des Casanova).
16. Telefunken HT-31 (Ja das Gold regiert die Welt, Faust).
17. Telefunken HT-30 (4 LPs), as above.
18. Heliodor 2700 708 (2 LPs), (as above & Als Büblein klein).
19. Telefunken TM-2 (Serenade – Faust).
20. Telefunken HT 25 (as above).
21. Eterna 756 (Le veau d'or & Invocation – Faust).
22. Eterna 487 (Faust excerpts).
23. Eterna 460 (Bartered Bride duet with Schmidt).
24. D.G.G. 19180 (O gib junges Blut, Faust, w/Hutt).
25. Telefunken 2183/1-2 (Bartered Bride duet with Schmidt).
26. Telefunken HT-10 (Bartered Bride duet with Schmidt).
27. Preiser, LV 249 (Bartered Bride duet with Hutt).

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

28. Rococo 5257 (Gut'n Abend Meister, Meistersinger, w/Lehmann).
29. D.G.G. 2721 109 (2 LP) (Grüss Gott mein Junker, with E. Kraus).
30. Court Opera Classics CO-387 (as above – Meistersinger).
31. Preiser LV-123 (Oh ihr boshafter Geselle! Meistersinger, with Schützendorf).
32. Top Classic Historia H-645 (Scenes 2. Meistersinger with Lehmann, Bettendorf, Schützendorf, Oehmann).
33. Top Classic Historia, H-648 (Schweig damit – Freischütz).
34. Preiser LV-120 (Meistersinger quintet, with Bettendorf, Oehmann, Gombert, Luders).
35. EMI HMV RLS 743 (13 LP) (Heil sei der schönen – Barbier von Bagdad).
36. BASF 222177 (8 LP) (Aria Mona Lisa, duet Abu Hassan, w/Witte).
37. Eterna 762 (Otello, finale Act 2, with Pattiera).
38. Preiser LV-269 (3 duets, Boheme, Forza, Otello, w/Pattiera).
39. Preiser LV-16 (Bei des Himmels ehernem Dache, ditto, Otello).
40. Preiser LV-61 (Duets 2, Forze & Boheme, w/Pattiera).
41. Club 99, CL-82 (14 arias, 1 song, w/Hutt, V. Schwarz, Pattiera).
42. RCA – Germany RL 30439 (2 LP) (Die legendäre Zeit der Berliner Oper, Abu Hassan sel. with Witte).
43. Rococo 5256 (2 duets, Boheme, Ach Geliebte, Forza in dieser feierlicher Stunde, w/Pattiera).
44. Electrola 040910, 2 LP. (B. Bride: Wer in Lieb entbrannt, Juive: wenn ew'ger Hadd M-singer: Jerum, jerum).
45. Vocal Record Collector Society, VRCS 1968 (Brindisi–Otello).
46. Vocal Record Collector Society, VRCS 1961 (Der Erlkönig).
47. Varese Sarabande VC 81093 (Abu Hassan complete with Witte & Schwarzkopt) (Same perf. as on 11 & 12 above).
48. Eterna 718 (Bartered Bride, duet with Schmidt).
49. Eterna 481 (Selection from the Flying Dutchman).

ADDENDUM

Mr. Robert Johannesson, of Kristianstad, Sweden, writes that he has a Bohnen record not listed in the discography. This is

83b. CARMEN: Euren Toast, with chorus.
 1106as B 22116 76525

THE RECORDS OF MICHAEL BOHNEN

Jürgen Schmidt

The earliest records of Michael Bohnen, made in the years 1913 and 1914, are of items exclusively from the bass repertory, the range he sang at the time. With one exception, the six titles for Favorite come from German operas. We are introduced to a young bass voice tending clearly towards the upper regions and whose possessor sets the greatest store by a noble singing line. Especially noteworthy is the striving for clarity of diction, which shows that even at the time of these early recordings the young singer had histrionic ambitions. Rocco's aria from *Fidelio* is well pointed, as is also Daland's aria (which has a small cut). Pogner's Ansprache should also be considered successful, though it is bettered by the later Pathé recording. Less so are Sarastro's two arias, whose mastery seemed to be less important to the young singer. Basilio's aria is sung in D major, Rossini's original key, and the two high F sharps are taken quite effortlessly by Bohnen. It is interesting to note that here the singer eschews all liberties.

The subsequent recordings for Pathé, Gramophone and Odeon are among the most important and finest made by the artist. They are dominated by Richard Wagner and Mephistopheles from Gounod's *Faust*. In contrast to the Favorite records, Michael Bohnen's voice seems to be darker and firmer. The recording technique of the Pathé Company and the other two firms was of course more advanced than that of Favorite. In the days before exclusive contracts it often happened that immediately after recording his repertoire for one company a singer went on to the next and remade the same titles for them. This was the case in Berlin in 1914. Michael Bohnen repeated the same selections from *Parsifal*, *Lohengrin* and *Faust* for Pathé, Gramophone and Odeon. While he recorded four fragments from the role of Gurnemanz for Odeon and two for Pathé, the complete monologue "Titirel, der fromme Held" appeared on the Gramophone label. Pathé was the only company to produce König Heinrich's "Prayer" from *Lohengrin* and Gramophone has the only version of the second speech of the Landgrave "Ein furchtbares Verbrechen ward begangen". The *Faust* selections are shared by Pathé and Gramophone. It is impossible to describe these records, they must be heard. He accomplishes these difficult roles with inexhaustible vocal resources and masterly declamation. While the Pathé discs soon disappeared from the market because of the problem of their reproduction, the Gramophone and Odeon recordings remained in the catalogues up to the introduction of the electrical process.

Michael Bohnen did not visit the recording studios again until February 1916. In the meantime he had exploited his easy upper register and extended his repertoire by the addition of baritone roles. The most important of these were Hans Sachs and Wotan, both of which were included in the new recording activities. The *Flieder* and *Wahn Monologues*, the *Taufspruch* and both speeches on the *Festwiese* were sung to perfection for Gramophone, together with the two big duets with Eva (the incomparable Lotte Lohmann being his partner) and *Stolzing* (with the already clearly failing Ernst Kraus). The first recording of *Wotan's Farewell* was also made at this time and, in addition, the duet for *Faust* and *Mephistopheles* with Robert Hutt and the final trio with Hutt and Lehmann. All these recordings show that by now the foundations had been laid for the start of an international career. It is of course very difficult to judge the arias from French and Italian operas with modern ears accustomed to hearing them only in the original language. Nevertheless, it must be accepted that Michael Bohnen sang the roles in Berlin in German and was enormously successful with his audiences.

The series for Odeon that followed, and which also contains scenes for Hans Sachs and the Dutchman's Monologue, shows how Bohnen had already begun to depart from a singing line in order to deliver via the recording horn what his public expected from him on stage. These ideas, which must have been highly original at the time, can hardly be understood, let alone appreciated, by those who have never seen Bohnen in person. Each subsequent recording strengthens this impression and one cannot help feeling that in them a magnificent singer is trying to become a singing showman. It was thus unavoidable that all the repetitions of existing selections – and there were a lot of them – produced, from the point of view of pure singing, worse results. There were repeats even within this Odeon series. There are remakes of the Dutchman's Monologue, a role incidentally that Bohnen seems never to have sung, and of both the *Faust* titles. Shortly after the end of the First World War came recordings of "Abendlich strahlt" from Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, and of the *Aida* duet with Vera Schwarz as the first good quality recordings.

In the following years the singer became so popular that his previous recordings for Gramophone were transferred from the cheap label to the much more expensive pink one. This meant that at the same time the former double-sided discs were now suddenly only available as single-sided ones. All the new recordings appeared in this form. Again there were remakes, but also important new titles like those from *Tosca*, *Mona Lisa*, *Der Barbier von Bagdad*, *L'Africaine* and the first title not sung in German, "Voici donc les débris" from *Robert le diable*. This series can be considered as very satisfying and vocally successful. For a long time the existence of the Act 2 "Salem Aleikum" from *Der Barbier von Bagdad* was doubted since it did not appear in any catalogue. However, its existence has been proved – as demonstrated by The Record of Singing Vol. 2.

His engagement by the Metropolitan Opera was followed by a series of 14 titles for Brunswick. The majority are from the German repertoire, and the Drinking Song from *Der Freischütz* and the two titles from *Das goldene Kreuz* are particularly successful. Astonishingly good from the vocal point of view are Wolfram's two arias from *Tannhäuser*. Less successful are the arias from *Dinorah* and *Robert le diable*, Sarastro's two arias and the songs.

The subsequent sessions for Gramophone produced remakes of the Toreador's Song and *Pagliacci* Prologue, together with a fresh item, the Brindisi from *Hamlet*, one of Bohnen's rarer records. These titles were the first to appear exclusively in double-sided format, just as from 1924 one could buy the formerly single-sided records as double-sided ones again — though now in the most expensive category 20 m (Künstler-Schallplatte). This policy was contradicted by the appearance of four records of items from the popular bass repertory in the cheap category; only the duet from *The Bartered Bride* (with Robert Hutt) was coupled with the *Hamlet* Brindisi and put in the expensive series. These were the last acoustic records to be made by the artist.

The first electric recordings were made in October 1926 for Odeon and in November 1926 for Parlophone. While the former series of arias and songs was for long among the standard Bohnen discs, the latter with scenes from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was only of minor importance. Here Bohnen is only a shadow of his former self, which is presumably why the scene with Beckmesser (Leo Schützendorf) was never issued in Germany. The sole electric recording for the Gramophone Company with Figaro's two arias can at best be considered a curiosity; the disc is extremely rare, which suggests that it aroused little interest.

The electric series for Brunswick testifies to the size of his voice but little can be heard of its former beauty. The subsequent recordings for Electrola and Ultraphon point in the same direction. While the Electrola discs document Bohnen's activities as revue star and singing film actor, Ultraphon tried to remake Bohnen's best-known operatic hits. Ultraphon's excellent technique enabled them to convey the imposing size of his voice, that there is little beauty in the singing is less disturbing in view of the programme chosen. Bohnen once again demonstrates his mastery of a quite endless supply of breath, a phenomenon also made clever use of in the Electrola series.

When we consider that in 1931 when he made his last commercial recordings the singer was forty-four years old, we can hardly speak of a long recording career. In view of his vocal decline one can reduce the period of his outstanding achievements on record to one of ten years. A general estimate of Michael Bohnen's records can only be that they are "above average". However, from the beginning of his career to its apparent zenith this judgement must be applied to a variety of aspects of his art.

GIANNINA RUSS

Since publication of the discography, David Hamilton of New York has detailed some additional LP issues and J. Vlaanderen of Amsterdam and Horst Wahl of Freiburg have given the 78's information. Two important points are made additionally in Herr Wahl's letter and invite comment.

- (a) Note 2 Page 133 — We suggested erratic speeds as an explanation for the second editions, however, Herr Wahl who used to work for Odeon, gives the reason as distant placing in the early recordings to avoid the female voices 'blasting'. He goes on to say that the distant placing of the female voices led to curious results in that the precious timbre of the great voices was lost and they sounded pale and colourless.

It hardly seems right to question Herr Wahl's explanation particularly in view of his experience with the Odeon Company, but since reading his letter I have spent hours re-listening to some fifty Fonotipias of Russ which were recorded from 1904 onwards and in truth I heard very little difference between the 1904 and 1905 recordings compared with the second editions of 1906. Perhaps collectors with good holdings of the Russ Fonotipias would care to write to the editor with their findings.

- (b) On a number of the Fonotipias a small take number appears after the catalogue number, most often it is '2' though some issues have '3'. Herr Wahl explains that all the waxes were sent to Berlin for processing and being two or three were usually cut, it rather depended on the studio staff on what was selected. It also implies that the catalogue number had been allocated before the recording was made and if things did not work out right, then they could go back for another try, with resultant extra 'takes'. Herr Wahl mentions that in adding the take number to the catalogue number in print, is wrong, and these numbers were intended for internal information only.

ADDENDA and CORRECTIONS

- 21 Delete 054023, insert 054033.
- 55 Insert — with Corradetti
- 57 Insert — Chi mi frena
- 59 acc. by A. Genesini (violin and organ)
- 60-61 acc. by A. Genesini (violin and piano)
- 71 Insert — with chorus
- 84 Delete Leoncavallo, Insert Giordano
- 87 Insert — with Garbin
- 91 Insert — with chorus

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

- 92 Delete entry (Mazzoleni not Russ was the soprano)
93-98 Recorded 1910
99-107 Recorded 1914
108 Matrix number is XXPH 3358 and therefore belongs to the 1908
batch of recordings
109-116 Recorded 1914
Add four unpublished items.

XPH 229 Semiramide
XPH 230 Vespri Siciliani April 1905
XPH 231 Guglielmo Tell
XPH 235 Guarany duet with Zenatello. May 1905

Microgroove

The version of 'La Vergine' on both Preiser CO381 and Scala 808 is No. 70.
The Preiser also includes items 99, 101 and 103 in addition to those listed.
Preiser LV 283 includes 93 and 94
HMV. RLS-724 includes 71 and 104
Rubini RS 300 includes 106
Tap. T325 includes 74
Preiser CO393 includes 49, 53, 58
Odeon ORX507 includes 84

The Editor,
Dear Sir,

21st June 1982

Giannina Russ

I have read with great interest the article and discography by Clifford Williams and John B. Richards of Giannina Russ and notice that, apropos of her Norma appearances, a suggestion is made that the role did not figure as prominently in the repertory of Mazzoleni. I have just been compiling the obituary of this last named singer who recently died at the age of 99 and find that she sang her first Norma at Bologna in 1910 and continued to sing the role regularly until April 1925 when she made her last stage appearance at the San Carlo in Naples.

As well as singing Norma in Bologna and Naples, she also sang the role at La Fenice, Venice; Piacenza; the Dal Verme in Milan; Brescia, Florence, Palermo, Verona Arena (1923), Turin, several smaller Italian houses, Barcelona, Budapest and Cairo. So it would seem that Mazzoleni sang almost as many Normas and with as much acclaim as did Giannina Russ.

Yours faithfully,
Harold Rosenthal

RECORD REVIEWS

Melba The American Recordings 1907-16
Five L.P.'s R.C.S. (Australia) Ltd. VRL50365

Six years ago in 1976 E.M.I. issued a fine set of five records covering Nellie Melba's nine London recording sessions 1904-26. Included were a number of unissued takes and it seemed that this represented the complete position as far as the Gramophone Company's output was concerned.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the current era of research and discovery is the uncertainty of any apparently definitive position, so that in fact two more London records have surfaced. These are another version of the 1904 Ave Maria (presumably Matrix 400c - No. 33 in the revised March 1982 R.C. discography) and the song Jean by Burleigh recorded in 1910 (Matrix 11689e - No. 106 R.C.). These were to have been included in the set under review which covers the Melba recordings made for the Victor Talking Machine Co. between 1907-16 now available through RCA of Australia in a splendid boxed set supervised by our well known contributor Wm. Moran and issued to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Permission to use the two GCL discoveries as a fill up to the present set was forthcoming, but unfortunately the tapes did not materialize and so with the best of intentions the famous Mapleson cylinder of the Huguenots excerpt is included. Recent research seems to confirm the long held suspicion of Dr. Stratton that the performance, marvellous though it is, comes from March 1st, 1903, when the Queen was Suzanne Adams and not Melba. Having said this the RCA set is in all respects a magnificent companion piece to the EMI set and enables us to hear all the officially released material and a good deal of the unpublished for good measure - all, in fact, that are thought to have survived.

As is well known Melba was a somewhat reluctant and, it is said, diffident recording artist, although judging by the number of rejected takes for both recording companies she took considerable care over what was passed for release.

By the time she was tempted into the Victor studios on March 5th, 1907, after a triumphant return to New York in the Hammerstein Manhattan Season which had opened in January that year, she was already a veteran recording artist with some 40 or so titles behind her for the Gramophone Company ending with a session in July 1906. She was 46 years of age and had enjoyed a triumphant operatic and concert career for about 20 years. Her operatic repertoire was settling down to her favourite and generally less taxing roles supplemented by an increasing number of concert tours. After this first Victor session she made one side for GCL in Paris in 1908 and then returned to Victor again in 1909. 1910 saw her most extensive sessions for both companies. Then follows a further gap to 1913 with her final Victor session in 1916.

The accompanying booklet is excellent and includes biographical and recording details together with the texts and translations where appropriate but most significantly it includes a full listing of dates of recording and matrix numbers which must surely be the definitive position and supplements and corrects the R.C. recent discography. The R.C. list credits the unpublished 1913 *Phidyle* and *Temps de Lilas* with Matrix Nos. C13901 and C13902 which logically seem to fit, but Bill Moran states 'Unnumbered' in the booklet accompanying this set.

From the session details we can now see in full the success and failure for the individual days. On the 5th March 1907 four takes were made of three titles but only the second take of *Caro nome* was released. The 24th March was a lot more successful : four takes of three titles, including the famous *O soave fanciulla* with Caruso. All three titles were released. Further sessions on March 27th-30th resulted in 16 releases from 23 takes of 19 titles. However on April 1st the luck ran out with no releases from three takes of two titles including for some reason two more attempts at the Boheme duet with Caruso and more sadly *Tutte le feste* from Rigoletto with Campanari.

It was to be the 1st January 1909 before she returned to the Victor studios where she made five more titles in seven takes, all accompanied by herself on the piano, an attribute which is often forgotten, as she was a more than competent pianist. Three of these titles remained, unpublished except by I.R.C.C. many years ago. January 6th was another good session with five titles — all released from only six takes.

In May 1910 the GCL cajoled the diva back into the studios but the result, seven titles released out of twenty recorded, can hardly have been an encouragement, but that didn't prevent her from undertaking her longest continuous session for Victor from August 22nd-26th. The details of these sessions again illustrate the vicissitudes and successes of the separate days. August 22nd she made only four takes covering three titles, one only was published. August 23rd, five titles, six takes, all five titles released. August 24th, five titles again, five takes, four published. August 25th, five titles, six takes, five published. August 26th, five titles, six takes, but only two published. That day's work included the only record she made as a pure accompanist, when she played the piano for her old Australian colleague and manager the flautist John Lemmone, in their encore piece Wetzger's *By the Brook*. Neither of the two takes made that day were approved and although she is thought to have accompanied him again in two takes on November 7th, one of which was published, Mr. Moran does suggest a possible doubt that she would actually have gone to the studios for this one item.

There is now a long gap to October 2nd, 1913, when five titles received seven takes and only three were published. October 3rd, seven titles received eight takes and only four were released. This session includes a curious variant, whereby she recorded *Depuis le jour* with orchestral and piano accompaniment. It would be natural to draw the conclusion that the piano version was by way of a rehearsal for the orchestral take, but both with this and two songs in her final 1916 session, it appears that the piano version was made after the orchestral one. October 4th saw four titles in

four single takes but only one was released and two others are described as personal records for Melba. The finale to her Victor sessions occurred on January 12th, 1916, when she made four titles in five takes, but as previously mentioned, the four titles are in fact the same two songs each made with orchestral and then piano accompaniment of which the orchestral versions were released.

Including the record with Lemmone she made 115 takes of 73 titles — 75 if one includes two records with 2 items per side. The total of titles also obviously includes remakes of the same piece. 18 titles were originally unpublished, but some fortunately have survived, so that a further six titles are restored to us on this reissue. These are a Debussy and two Ronald songs of 1909 of which *Down in the Forest* is a particularly beautiful piece. The 1913 piano version of *Depuis le jour* and the record containing two Bemberg songs and from 1916 the piano version of *Songs my Mother taught me*, from a personal test record found at Melba's home. In the apparently lost for ever department are the 1907 piano *Voi che sapete*, *Romeo and Juliet Waltz*, the *Rigoletto* duet with Campanari, the 1910 *Inflammatus* from the Rossini *Stabat Mater* and *Bid me discourse* by Bishop. From 1913 are two Duparc and one Chausson songs together with the curious *Vocal Lesson No. 1* and the 1916 piano version of *Annie Laurie*.

Melba's recordings remain a discussion point for collectors and with those soaring top notes it is doubtful if the acoustic process ever did her complete justice. It is a pity that the first two Victor sessions coincided with their 'fail safe' period, when the voice is somewhat distanced and it is not until the 1910 recordings that we can hear enough to judge her more fairly by. The 1913 and 1916 records seem excellent from a technical point of view but by this time although there are many beautiful things the voice understandably was showing some occasional strain, but overall what a marvellous series this is.

The transfers have been excellently made from a variety of sources — original 78's — 78 pressings on vinylite made in the 1950's — playback direct from original 'mothers' — playback direct from original 'masters' using a special stylus to ride the ridges and sometimes a combination of these various sources. As a result there is very little by way of poor surfaces and ticks. There seems to be some sort of background hum to the Side 3 Band 6 *Sweet Bird* which may or may not be present on the original. I felt slight irritation occasionally at some fractionally premature fade downs and fade ins but these are small faults in an otherwise impeccably engineered set. The accompanying booklet is excellent and I only detected one slight error in captioning on Side 5 where the August 1910 title should be raised to precede Band 4 and not Side 6 Band 1.

If I have any other complaint it is that I feel the set could have been successfully issued on four not five records with the total playing time at around 215 minutes. As it is five sides last 20 minutes or less.

The pressings are excellent and sport a handsome reproduction of an electric style Victor label and how fitting it is for RCA Australia to undertake this great service for Australia's most famous daughter.

N.R.

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

PETER DAWSON (1882-1961): Ambassador of Song. EMI Records Australia and the National Library of Australia. A collection of some 200 recordings from 1904 to 1958, presented on 10 LP discs, with 24-page booklet with comprehensive notes and photos. Boxed Set PD-1.

Peter Burgis, Sound Archivist of the National Library of Australia and author of the extensive notes and biographical material presented with this remarkable set of recordings, tells us that he has uncovered about 1300 titles recorded by Dawson issued under his own name or by a known pseudonym. In this collection, we have 178 bands representing recordings originally found on Edison Bell, Lambert, Colonial, White, and Edison cylinders; Pathe, Zonophone, G&T, Prestophone, and HMV discs. A number of the latter are from test pressings from unpublished discs. In addition, we have material from the archives of the New Zealand Radio and the Australian Broadcasting Commission, as well as the AWA network of Australia. On many of the early recordings we have Mr. Dawson masquerading under several of his various *noms de disque*, including Hector Grant, Leonard Dawson, James Osborne, George Welsh; it will come as a surprise to many that Peter Dawson was also a composer, but usually under such assumed names as J. P. McCall, Peter Allison, Evelyn Byrd and others. The present collection contains 23 of Dawson's own songs.

The format of this release is arranged to present selections from Dawson's repertory in chronological order, from 1904 to 1958, on the first 14 sides. The two sides of the eighth disc are devoted exclusively to recordings of Dawson's own composition; record 9 presents songs of Australia and New Zealand, while the final disc is designed exclusively for collectors. This includes a recording by Dawson's teacher, Sir Charles Santley, of *Simon the Cellarer*, followed by pupil Dawson rendering the same selection. In addition the speaking voice of Dawson is heard in an interview, an advertising record for an HMV Gramophone, and other bits and pieces.

Especially when one considers the wide variety of the sources, the transfers are generally excellent. A very conscientious effort has been made to make the copies at the correct playing speeds, and for the most part this has been successful. Without the music for many of the selections, a judgement had to be made on voice quality, and while the listener might wish to quibble here and there, the progression through the years shows remarkably little change in Dawson's voice. Since Dawson was primarily a singer of ballads, and his repertory kept abreast of the current output through the years, this same progression tends to show the deterioration of this popular Edwardian form in the later years of Dawson's recording career. Of the 178 bands in this set, four are from oratorio (two of these are electrical recordings) and eight are from grand opera, all acoustical recordings, and all in English with one interesting exception: a fragment

from *Salome* conducted by Albert Coates in 1924 is sung in German. There is only one Gilbert & Sullivan excerpt, and that from an unimpressive concerted bit from 1906. If I have any criticism for the selection of recordings used, it is that the overall impression given by this collection does not give full credit to the talents of the singer. Perhaps this is in part due to the overall make up of Dawson's immense recorded repertory which the selection in this group of records probably accurately reflects. Personally, I was disappointed not to find some of the solos from the complete electrical recordings of *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Yeomen of the Guard*, conducted by Malcolm Sargent, in which Dawson joined members of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Although Dawson was not a member of that company, these records show he should have been! I also miss some of his electrical operatic excerpts which, although sung in English, show some fine singing, such as an excellent trill in his version of Vulcan's Song from Gounod's *Philemon et Baucis*. In his autobiography, *Fifty Years of Song* (1951) the singer gives a list of 30 numbers used in his Australian concert tour of 1909 . . . six of these are from oratorio and two from opera, and he notes that he had the greatest success with "O ruddier than the Cherry", unfortunately missing from the set. I suspect that many of Dawson's early electrics were by-passed because of the annoying "frying bacon" sound of HMV surfaces at the time. The only transfers in this set which are objectionable because of the excessive use of electronic noise suppression are those which date from 1925 to 1929 (mostly on Side One of Record Four). It is obvious that many selections were used because of their rarity . . . recordings made in Australia which did not receive wide circulation, unpublished items, and non-commercial off-the-air material. From this standpoint, the Dawson fans and record collectors are certainly well served by this collection.

A special note should be made of the excellent printed material provided with the set. As noted, this is the work of Peter Burgis of the Australian National Library. Each record side is documented with a progressive biographical sketch, a running commentary on the selections used, and complete annotation as to matrix numbers and takes, dates of recording, accompanying artists where known, etc. The booklet is also well illustrated with reproductions of rare photographs, concert programmes, and record labels. A programme from a Feb. 2, 1909 performance of *Meistersinger* at Covent Garden reminds us that Dawson once trod the boards of that historic theatre, if only briefly.

EMI Records Australia and the National Library of Australia are to be congratulated on the very successful completion of this monumental tribute which celebrates the centenary of the birth of Australia's greatest concert artist. It was conceived with much national pride, and documents as nothing else could possibly do one of the most remarkable figures in the history of 20th Century recording.

W. R. Moran

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GIANNINA RUSS

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera Association

BOOK REVIEW

VOCALION RECORDS, compiled by Chris Mankelow, published by Claremont Records, Flat 1a, 67 Claremont Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1TE. 56pp, 6 x 8 ins., card covered.

List of all titles issued on the Vocalion label 1919 to 1927. The listing is numerical and, understandably in view of the rarity of many discs, there are gaps, surprisingly few in fact and it may be of course that some were unissued. Vocalion was a high faluting company, the records of excellent quality, slightly more expensive than their competitors, the roster of first class artists was not very large and it would appear that these were encouraged to step outside recording the regular run of the mill repertoire—all of which of course mitigated against large sales. They did also of course issue from masters of the American affiliate, Crimi, Lazzari, Rimini, Raisa and Tokhatyan. So there are many gems to be found – if you are lucky. One such is the bass-baritone Horace Stevens recording of *Sulla poppa* from the Ricci Brothers opera *the Prisoner of Edinburgh* (05246). How this emerged from a string of otherwise undistinguished songs and arias amazes me, probably the best thing in the catalogue.

The price of £4.50 may seem a bit steep for a small publication, but the cost of printing small runs is getting prohibitive and, like its predecessors "Voices of the Past" series, will soon become collectors' pieces in their own right. So be warned. Copies can be ordered direct from the publisher.

J.D.

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